

Idaho Logging Safety

News



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Year-End Wrap Up

What's Been Happening . . .

By David Kludt

I guess it's that time of the year again. Time to pull out the woolies and long johns and get ready for that fun time of the year—yep, winter logging! I've got to be real honest, there's something about snow that doesn't get me too excited anymore. It seems like everything that was easy before gets a little more complicated. Do we have more bad accidents in the winter? Over the years that has not proven to be true and the only explanation I can come up with is that three feet of snow seems to be more forgiving than that hard, dry ground. I have to mention that I've seen a lot of caterpillars in the roads this fall and some bee nests in the ground.



Luckily this log truck driver walked away with minor scrapes and bruises. With the doors jammed shut, the only way the driver had out was through the broken-out front windshield. The driver is a pretty big fellow and the smashed cab left very little room to escape, in fact it didn't look like there was enough. I guess when you go through what he did, there is a little extra incentive involved.

That tells me that by next spring I will be able to predict exactly what kind of winter we have had.

We haven't mentioned too much about truck accidents for awhile but they haven't gone away. It seems like more hours and more miles are not helping with this problem. I continue to see the bark and other evidence along the roads that pretty much tells the story. One thing we know, if you have enough accidents, somebody is eventually going to get hurt. In fact, a truck driver was killed up north this fall in an accident that probably wasn't too much different than many of them that occur. I don't know what happened in this accident. There may have been some type of mechanical failure; however, most are caused but the same thing—SPEED!

One question comes up on nearly every job I visit. Do you know of a good man looking for work, such as hookers, sawyers, cat skimmers, machine operators, you name it? I used to have a list but I don't anymore. It's a problem that we are going to have to face. Not only is production going to suffer, safety will definitely become more of an issue as we face more inexperienced workers. There's nothing I like better than to see a good, experienced crew going about their jobs in a professional manner. The problem is there are more guys out there that look my age than there are guys that look my son's age. I don't have an answer but something has to be done to make this industry more attractive to good, young people looking for an occupation.

All right, I'll quit harping. Things can't be all bad, with the prospect of that clean, white stuff scheduled to appear any day, it will signal the beginning of the end of winter. Have a good, safe season and we'll see you in the woods.

Making movies

QUIET ON THE SET—ACTION

Every summer and fall we work on getting some new videos for the spring first aid classes. Here's just a preview of things to come next spring.



I caught up with one of Dabco's line crews out of Kamiah. Mike Snyder had volunteered earlier to be in one of these first aid videos but was having second thoughts when the big moment arrived. Since the boys were eating lunch, what better time than this to do a choking video. Pictured above, from left, is Pete Morgan, sawyer, Mike Snyder, yarder operator, Rick Christopherson, loader operator and owner, Bob Pfefferkorn, set-up man.



Above is the film crew for the Brown Brothers Logging from the Emmett area. From left is Thad Lee, processor operator, Wayne DeWalt, yarder operator, and Bulmarow Garcia, chaser.

If you look close you can see Bulmarow pointing toward Hollywood, Calif., because when the movie scouts see him in the Loggers first aid videos that is where he will be headed! This might not be the case for Thad. Every time I would yell "ACTION," Thad would fire up his processor and start grabbing trees. The only problem with that was making logs had nothing to do with the video we were making!

This is really not Thad's fault. For several years he has heard "ACTION" being yelled at him by John and Tim Brown, and when the brothers yell "ACTION" they don't mean making a dog gum first aid video. THANK YOU very much to every company that has helped us out this year!

SIGNS, SIGNS, EVERYWHERE WE NEED SIGNS

By Don Hull

As we work more on private, close-in patches, we encounter more traffic. We need to use solid measures to keep the public safe and your liability to a minimum. Signs are the first hint the general public and other forest users have that there is something going on in the area. Almost all of the logging jobs I go on have their signs in place but there is still the occasional job that's slow to set the signs or they just plain forget.

Some signs work well but others are pretty ineffective. As most loggers know, when you need to close a road to do some falling you often need to use more than just a sign. I was on a job awhile ago and the logger was closing the road from early in the morning until late in the afternoon on a fairly busy hunting road. Some of the signs were really large



and hunter orange, but drivers would still go around. Evidently they thought, and I use that term loosely, the signs were for the other guys, not them. That logger finally had to put big logs on both ends of the road each morning and remove them at night.

I talked with another logger that had a similar problem except that he had to hire a flag person to guard the very busy road. He said that people would pull up, stop and then drive right around the flagger. The logger told the flag person to stop the traffic even if he had to hit the car with the flag and then call the sheriff.

I know signs are expensive but in most cases they really do help. Most people see the signs and turn around, keeping themselves safe and you accident free.

Keep up the good work!!

THERE'S THREE FEET OF SNOW, WHAT DO YOU MEAN FIRE?



By Galen Hamilton

When it's 90 degrees out and the horseflies are chewing on a guy's neck, having a fire break out on a logging job is a constant worry for the crew. When those same loggers are wading through snow up to their knees or falling down for the eighth time that day in the mud, fire on the logging job is probably not too high on their priority list. But after hearing a couple of stories lately, maybe fire should still be on the list. (You guys need at least one more thing to worry about!)

The first story came from a logging outfit that had an electrical wire short out, starting a fire on a hydraulic machine. It ignited down by the engine and the hydraulic valves. . .you know, the place that is almost impossible to get to. That was the first problem. The second one was getting a fire extinguisher to put it out. Not that there



weren't any on the job. The boss said they had plenty; in fact he said he went through five before finding one that worked!

As the owner of the company thumbed through the bills he held for replacing all the wiring and hoses on that machine, he reminded me how important it was to take a couple of minutes every now and then to maintain those fire extinguishers on the job. You guys know the drill—check the gauges to make sure they're full then turn them upside down and give them a few whacks to knock the powder stuff loose. He figured that for each time he ran to a different machine, grabbed an extinguisher, ran back, crawled up on the hydraulic machine and heard the extinguisher go "PFHSST", he could see a couple of hundred dollars more being added to the bill. When he finally got hold of an extinguisher that worked, he knocked the fire down immediately. He said if the first fire extinguisher he grabbed would have worked he could have had that machine back running in an hour or two instead of the two days it took.

I have to be a little careful about preaching too much on this subject. As a highly organized safety guy I was digging through the box in the back of my pickup looking for some top secret literature (a map to find out for sure which state I was in) when I happened to notice the nozzle on my fire extinguisher. It was completely plugged with mud from the bees. Do as I say, not as I do!

The second story came from a logging outfit that also owns trucks. The mechanic had wheeled a truck into the shop for just a couple of minutes for a quick, minor repair. Standing across the shop talking to the company owner and a driver, the mechanic noticed the log truck driver's eyes get very big as he said, "OH CRAP." (That is the way those log truck drivers talk.) When the mechanic and the owner turned they saw flames rolling out from under the truck. They also said, "OH CRAP." (Apparently they learned that from the driver!) They immediately turned the battery switch off and, since they were in the shop, they had the water hose right there to get the fire out in just a few seconds.

It turned out that the battery cables had rubbed together long enough (they figured they were around 15 years old) that they wore the hide off each other allowing them to arc, starting the fire. The mechanic spent a good part of the next day replacing the burnt-up hardware.

Even though it cost quite a little bit to replace the wire and cables that had been damaged, and the truck and its driver missed a day's work, the mechanic figured they were really lucky. This all happened about 7 p.m. and the mechanic said he was going to pull the truck out, park it in the truck shed and then they were all heading home. His point was that if the fire would have started 15 minutes later it could have burnt up this loggers' whole fleet.

When I mentioned the possibility that he could have lost his trucks and if he thought it might be a good article for the newsletter to remind other loggers of this situation, he said, "Naw, just let them burn. Have you seen the price of diesel lately?" I am sure he was just kidding. . .well, pretty sure!

Featured Company

HENDRIX LOGGING . . . St. Maries, Idaho

Jody Hendrix was in the log loading business for years but several years ago he decided to go into the skidding side of logging. He purchased a Kobelco excavator rigged up with hydraulic winches and a tower (see photo on next page). He has the small Acme carriage on the machine which works well.

The line machine doesn't require any tie backs because he puts the bucket of the excavator on the ground. All the workers have to do is pull the skyline out and they are skidding. It is a very fast and safe system.

Hendrix Logging workers on the job, from left, Don Yearout, chaser and skidder operator, Jody Hendrix, owner and operator, and Ryan Becker, hooker.



Pictured in the foreground is Jake, the logging dog. Earlier this year, he was hit by the rubber tire skidder when he was not paying any attention on the landing. After some time to mend and then a long lecture on logging safety, Jake was back to work...light duty, of course!



Hendrix Logging's new Kobelco excavator rigged with hydraulic winches and a tower.

On the Lighter Side. . .



"Look Daddy, elk and deer tracks!"

"Yes, Jenna, all of God's Creatures have a natural sense to come down out of the mountains when winter hits."



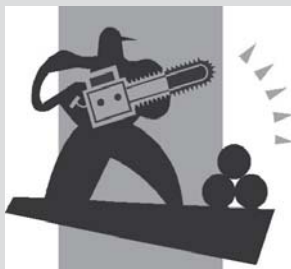
"But Daddy. What are those tracks clear on top of that snowy mountain?"

"Well, dear, those are loggers!"

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HOLDING SOMETHING OVER THE SAFETY GUY'S HEAD

I walked out to talk to a timber faller on a logging job in eastern Idaho recently. We had visited for a couple of minutes and I couldn't help but notice that this fellow had a big smile on his face and was on the verge of busting out laughing. After I checked my fly a couple of times, I finally asked him what was so funny. He pointed up in the tree I was standing under. Directly above me about 60 feet up was a huge fir limb that had been torn out of the tree by the wind. It was hanging precariously on two much smaller limbs and looked as if it could fall at any time.

When I looked back at this faller he actually did bust out laughing. He reminded me that about 10 years back I had given him a big speech on "the first thing you do walking up to a tree is to look up for any dangers." Jeez, don't you loggers forget anything?

Since it had started snowing that morning and this timber faller was enjoying himself so much

teaching the safety guy about safety, he shared some more of his wisdom with me. He said it was hard enough to see broken off tops, limbs and other

objects in the summer, let alone in the winter. When the tree is loaded with snow it is almost impossible to see what is lurking over your head. You have to take the extra time to look things over closely.

The logger patted me on the shoulder and with an overly exaggerated look of concern on his face said, "Galen, if you are going to be out here in the woods you got to be safe. The first thing you do when you approach a tree...."

I have to admit it is a little disheartening when you are walking back to your pickup and the timber faller's laughter is louder than the saw he is running.



ONCE AGAIN, GOOD JOB LOGGERS

Even though this was not a logging accident, I heard kind of a neat story the other day of how a logger handled a situation. I am going to be pretty vague on the details, but I think you will get the picture.

The results of the accident left a person with several injuries including severe pain in the neck area. Because of the situation there were many people at the accident site including the emergency people that had been called. When it came time, people were directed to pick the injured person up and pack him quite a little distance to where a backboard had been set out. Just before the group was to lift this person, the logger watching said, "Wait just a minute, shouldn't you put him on the board before you move him anywhere?"

A person who also happened to be there and who relayed this story to me said that after what

could be described as some embarrassed looks had been exchanged, the back board was brought over and the victim was loaded with care.

We will never know what could have happened, maybe nothing, but the victim did have broken bones in the neck and back along with internal injuries.

When I started this article I was going to say something clever about the time you loggers spend in the first-aid classes in the spring and how it is all worthwhile, but I have changed my mind. You know what I truly think it is—COMMON SENSE. The only thing I will never understand is how come you loggers have so much more of it than the rest of the population.



Near Miss Reports

by Galen Hamilton



NEAR MISS 1

For all you truck drivers out there that have had to put up with ol' Galen over the years bugging you about staying by your door when you're being loaded, you will be happy to know that one of your brother truckers was able to stick it back in my face the other day.

Apparently he was standing at his running board filling out his load ticket. When he finished, he jumped up in his truck to retrieve something out of the passenger side of the cab. At that precise moment the loader swung around with a grapple full of logs and one of them came sliding out smashing the fuel tank and steps of his BRAND NEW truck.

What he was more than happy to point out to me was that if he had been standing where I told him to he would have been in the same shape as his bent up steps.

The other point this experienced driver made was that it does not matter where you are or what you are doing, if you are in the woods you had better be alert 100 percent of the time!

NEAR MISS 2

A grapple skidder operator was skidding tree lengths away from a line machine. When he grappled several trees he also got one of the line chokers caught in between the drag. Not knowing this he took off with the chokers and the carriage. The highlead operator was on the ground because he was unhooking the drags and also running the line machine. The skyline and the mainline brakes were on. The skidder operator was heading down the road with the carriage and the tree lengths when all of a sudden the choker pulled loose from between the trees letting the carriage fly through the air narrowly missing the chaser. Because of the tension created with the brakes being on, it created a slingshot like affair.

After a few choice words and some shaky knees, the boys decided to sit down and have a short safety meeting.

NEAR MISS 3

A timber faller fell a nice doug fir around the hill. He watched after the tree hit the ground to see if any limbs or other hazards were going to fall. When nothing happened he long butted the fir and proceeded to limb the tree and buck the first log. He then worked up the next log and started to make the cut. Suddenly a snag came from out of nowhere and hit about one foot from his saw. He is still not sure if he did anything wrong. He knows he was lucky and he wants you to know that he is sure if a snag falls and nobody is around, IT WILL MAKE NOISE!!



NEAR MISS 4

A timber faller with many years of experience described a near miss that could very well have ended up as a fatality. The faller was cutting oversize timber on a mechanical logging operation. He fell a tree onto one of the decks in order to lay it so it could be skidded. Over the years the faller had made a habit, whenever possible, of getting behind a standing tree as the cut tree went to the ground. Sometimes that meant moving quite a ways to find a tree. In this case the falling tree hit the deck, kicked back and sideways nearly 20 feet. It jumped his saw which he had set on the ground and landed about one foot behind him, just as he looked back from behind that standing tree. He credits his good luck to that GOOD HABIT! I suspect that this faller has developed a number of good habits over the years and that might explain why he has never been seriously injured in the woods.

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Comments and suggestions welcome.

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